DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 118 228 PS 008 286

TITLE Early Childhood Education in Action: The Second Year.
INSTITUTION California State Dept. of Education, Sacramento. Office of Information/Dissemination.
PUB DATE 75
NOTE 34p.; For the first annual evaluation report (1973-74), see ED 110 168
AVAILABLE FROM State Department of Education, 721 Capitol Mall, Sacramento, California 95814 (Paper, no price quoted)

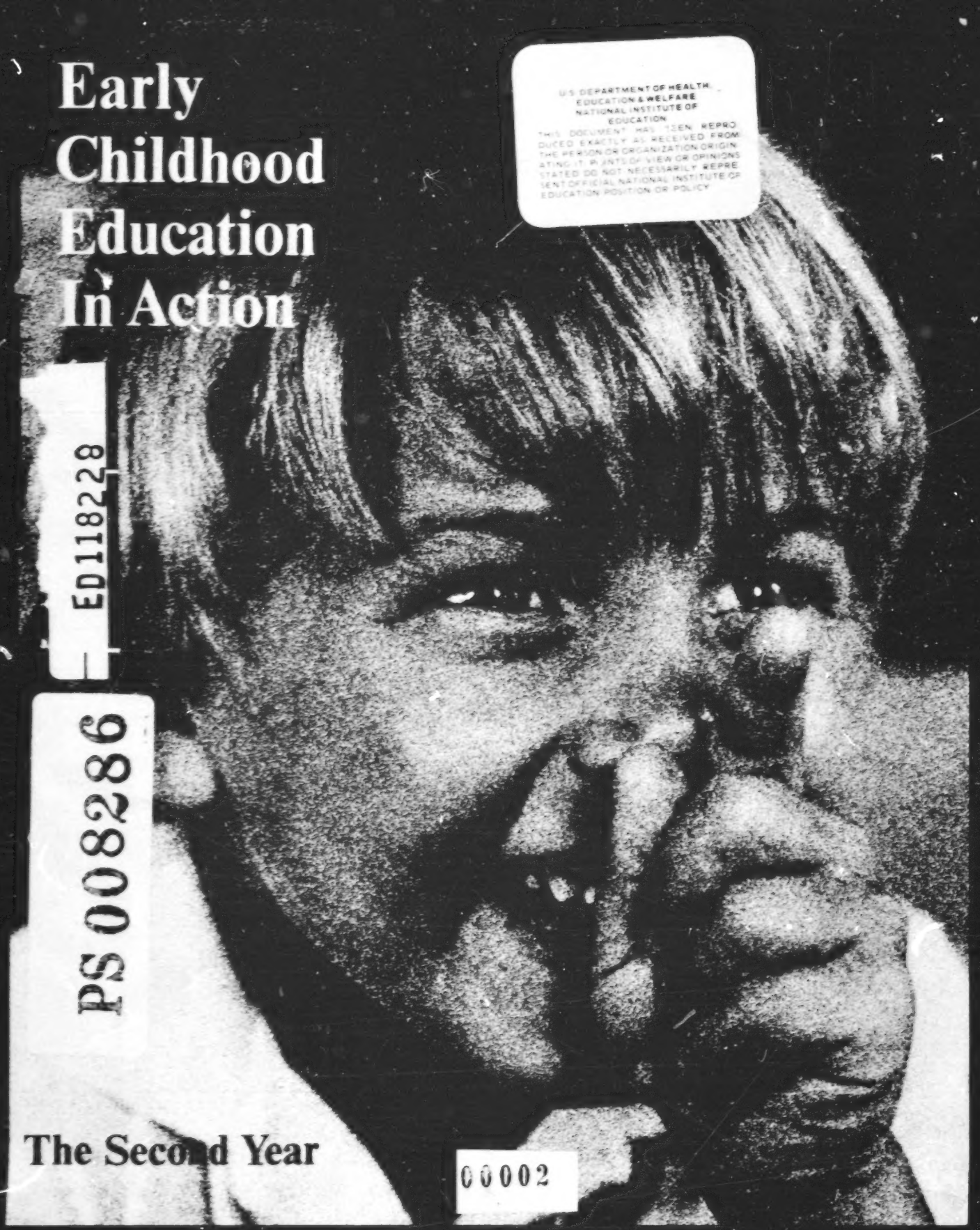
EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage
DESCRIPTORS Diagnostic Teaching; *Early Childhood Education; Elementary School Students; *Individualized Instruction; Kindergarten; Parent Counseling; Parent Education; *Parent Participation; *Program Descriptions; Program Evaluation; Program Planning; Staff Role; *State Programs
IDENTIFIERS California Plan for Early Childhood Education

ABSTRACT

This report describes the second year activities and progress of California's plan for Early Childhood Education (ECE), which in 1974-1975 included more than 1,300 schools and 22 percent of the state's children in kindergarten through third grade. Topics covered are (1) An overview of ECE; (2) Why ECE works, including parent participation, parent education, individualized instruction, staff role, concise planning, and accountability; (3) First year results in math and reading; and (4) Proposals for strengthening, continuing, and expanding ECE. The appendix gives sources of additional information about ECE. (GO)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

Early Childhood Education In Action



The Second Year

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

ED118228

PS 008286

00002

Early Childhood Education In Action

The Second Year

CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Wilson Riles—Superintendent of Public Instruction
Sacramento, 1975

00003

C0004

Foreword

One of the most gratifying experiences in my career as an educator has been to watch a comprehensive reform plan for revitalizing and restructuring primary education become a reality in California.

The plan for Early Childhood Education (ECE) resulted from over a year of work by a special task force appointed in April, 1971. After approval by the State Board of Education, the Legislature, and the Governor in November, 1972, the plan was implemented in 1,013 schools in the fall of 1973.

ECE was expanded in the 1974-75 school year to include 1,300 schools and 22 percent of state's children enrolled in kindergarten through the third grade.

ECE is working. This report explains how well—and why. Since it is proving itself, I recommend that ECE be expanded in the 1975-76 school year to include 50 percent of the state's children in the four grade levels covered by ECE. This, of course, will require additional funding.

Reading scores of second graders in the ECE program increased from the usual 10 months gain for 10 months of instruction to 11 months gain for 10 months of instruction. Other second grade ECE children achieved as much as 14 months gain for 10 months of instruction when additional special services were coordinated with ECE.

Meanwhile, I continue to be elated—not only by the progress that has already been shown, but also by the promise ECE holds for the future of public education in our state and in our nation.

I urge all interested parents, educators, and school board members to learn more about ECE. Make arrangements to visit an ECE school in your area. See for yourself what it is all about. For additional information, call the ECE information office at the State Department of Education. The phone number is 916-322-2553.

As Californians become more fully aware of what ECE is accomplishing and can continue to accomplish, I am confident they will share my belief that there can be no turning back. Our future direction is clear. We must carry on and expand this unparalleled effort to meet the educational needs of *all* children.

Wilson Riles

Superintendent of Public Instruction

00005

06006

Contents

Foreword iii

An Overview—ECE: What Is It? 1

ECE in Action—Why It Works 3
Parent Participation—A Must 3
Parent Participation at Travis 4
Parent Participation in San Mateo County 5
Parent Participation: Sometimes Difficult 7
Education of Parents—A Must 7
Individualized Instruction—A Must 8
Lowering the Adult/Pupil Ratio 8
Using the Diagnostic/Prescriptive Approach 8
The Assessment Process 10
A Learning Environment for Individualization 10
Individualization at Travis 12
Individualization at Manteca 12
A New Role for Staff—A Must 14
The Teacher's Role 14
The Principal's Role 16
Auxiliary Personnel and Staff Development 17
Concise Planning—A Must 17
Making an Assessment of Needs 18
Establishing Objectives 18
Developing a Plan of Action 18
Evaluating Program Implementation 18
Accountability—A Must 19

First Year Results—ECE Is Working 21
Mathematics Results 22
Reading Results 22

The Road Ahead 23
Strengthening the Program 23
Continuing and Expanding ECE 24

Appendix 25

00007

Credits

Photographs

The cover photo and the photos on pp. iv, 5, 6, 9, 11, 19, and 24 are copyrighted photographs of the National Education Association and are used here by permission of the NEA. The other photos are used by permission of the photographers: pp. ii, 20, and 26, Mary Short; p. 2, B. R. Becker; p. 13, *The Union Democrat*, Sonora; p. 15, Scandia Elementary School, Travis Air Force Base; and p. 17, Mary Silva.

Preparation and printing

This publication was prepared under the direction of the Office of Information/Dissemination, California State Department of Education, and published by the Department, 721 Capitol Mall, Sacramento, CA 95814. It was printed by the Office of State Printing and distributed under the provisions of the Library Distribution Act.

1975

00008

An Overview

ECE: What Is It?

Early Childhood Education (ECE) in California is a revolutionary plan to restructure schooling from kindergarten through the third grade.

The effort is pumping new hope and vigor into public education by making fundamental changes in the traditional ways schools work.

- It is beginning to restructure the entire educational program at four grade levels.
- It is bringing together all of the most successful learning and teaching practices into each classroom.
- It is giving parents a meaningful voice in the reform of their children's schools.

ECE has not discovered a magical new method of teaching or learning. It has no easy solutions. Instead, it leans heavily on old-fashioned hard work and the creativeness of many diverse talents. It is both a *process* and a *result*. The *process* is the manner in which educators, school board members, and parents transform a school from the traditional mode to one that incorporates the lessons of modern educational research into the mainstream of its program. The *result*, which differs from one school to another, is a new kind of school where children have an opportunity to learn more than they did under traditional programs and to achieve at a level nearer their full potential.

ECE was enacted on a phase-in basis in November, 1972, when Senate Bill 1302 was approved by the state Legislature and signed into law by the Governor.

In 1973-74, the first year of operation, $25 million was appropriated for ECE. The plan involved approximately 172,000 children (14 percent of the state's enrollment in kindergarten through the third grade) in 1,013 schools in 800 school districts.

In 1974-75, ECE's second year of operation, the program was expanded to include 22 percent of the children in the same four grade levels. The 1974-75 state appropriation of $41 million for ECE enabled 829 school districts to serve approximately 250,000 children at more than 1,300 schools. The appropriation provided participating schools with an extra allocation of $130 for each child in the ECE program; an additional $65 per pupil was provided for the lowest achievers.

ECE provides a comprehensive approach to improve the skills and abilities of *all* children—regardless of their economic backgrounds or unique educational needs—by capitalizing on

00009

ECE places heavy emphasis on individualized instruction.

the rich learning opportunities present in a child's early years.

The program stresses the need for early detection of learning problems and early intervention to anticipate and to correct problems before they become serious. This approach, according to the findings of educational research, is more effective and far less expensive than remediation in later years.

As a total educational strategy, ECE places heavy emphasis on such elements as:

- Individualization of instruction to meet each child's capabilities and needs
- Diagnostic and prescriptive profiles for each child
- Active, continuous involvement of parents in their children's education
- Learning experiences which develop positive attitudes and feelings of self-worth in each pupil
- Rewarding success by permitting districts with successful programs to expand ECE into more schools

ECE requires each school to develop its own ECE plan following a parent-school appraisal of the educational needs and aspirations of that particular community. Consequently, no two local plans in the state are exactly alike or work in the same way.

However, each of the 1,300 school plans in operation in 1974-75 provides for the following:

- An assessment of local needs
- Locally defined objectives expressed in terms that can be measured
- A restructured instructional program to ensure continuous progress by each child, particularly in the basic areas of reading, language usage, and mathematics
- Staff development and inservice education
- Parent participation
- Parent education
- Evaluation of pupils' health needs
- Multicultural experiences for all children
- Bilingual instruction, in appropriate situations, for children with limited or no ability to speak English
- Coordination of all educational resources at the school—federal, state, and local—to meet the needs of the children
- Continual evaluation of each child's progress and of the program itself

Now that the official first-year evaluation results have been compiled and schools are well into the 1974-75 program, it is possible to examine how and why ECE is working.

00010

ECE in Action

Why It Works

California's ECE program was designed to get results, results that often had been lacking in the fragmented approach to learning that most elementary schools have traditionally used.

It is a carefully constructed attempt to improve pupil achievement. It coordinates previously fragmented efforts and capitalizes on the promising elements of existing programs.

Resources of the community are encouraged to focus on the child's needs. In addition, the ECE concept places an emphasis on success. Without success, ECE programs cannot be expanded. This carrot approach, which ceases when all schools are in the program, has been credited with spurring parents and educators to try harder so more children in their districts can benefit from ECE schools.

ECE is often described as a common-sense approach to education. Every aspect of the program is intended to produce positive changes. These changes enhance each other, creating a force that seems to be greater than the sum of its parts—a force that is spelling educational progress.

Although mastery of the three "R's" is at the core of the ECE program, a whole series of "E's" has been generated by the program—things like excitement, enthusiasm, eagerness, exploration, extra effort—giving new impetus to the learning process.

To understand the success of ECE, it is important to see how the following key aspects of the ECE concept contribute to the overall strength of the program.

Parent Participation—A Must

As noted previously, parent involvement is an essential element in ECE. The importance of this involvement stems from the belief that parents and others in the community—along with teachers and other school staff members—share responsibility for the education of children.

ECE recognizes that the involvement and participation of the total school community is important for any measure of success in school programs.

The evaluation study of ECE's first year of operation reported that approximately

00011

"Parents can increase their understanding of their own child."

23,000 volunteers and 8,000 paid aides worked in ECE's 1,013 schools. The paid aides were usually parents and others from the community.

Besides taking part in the program planning and evaluation as members of the ECE advisory committee at each school, parents and other community members are directly involved in classroom activities. In addition to helping individualize instruction, the effective use of parents in the classroom has other advantages:

- Parents can increase their understanding of their own child and of that child's association with his peers.
- Teachers can better understand the child and determine the type of attention he needs by becoming acquainted with the child's parents.

Parents assist the educational process in a multitude of ways: They help prepare instruction materials; they help screen children for physical problems; they work with children on a one-to-one basis; they enrich the classroom by bringing to it their own experiences, insights, interests, and cultural backgrounds.

Since the ECE program usually includes the keeping of an individual learning profile or continuum for each pupil, it is easier for parents and teachers to pinpoint where a child stands at a given time in a given skill area and where he should be going.

"Parent-teacher conferences, aided by the profile, are a great communication device," asserts an ECE coordinator. "They involve the parent and enable both the parent and the teacher to gain more insight about the child."

At one ECE school a copy of the student's continuum record is included with the report card. Both the report card and continuum record are reviewed and discussed in regularly scheduled parent-teacher conferences.

Involvement of representatives from the community at large—senior citizens, junior and senior high school and college students, members of local service organizations and businesses—also contributes to the effectiveness of ECE programs.

"One of the most exciting things about ECE is the real growth of the parent-teacher-community relationships," reports Elvie Watts, ECE director for the Sacramento Unified School District. "Parents and teachers share their thinking and knowledge of the child to encourage him to perform in ways that will help him really grow."

Children Are Too Busy To Be Bored, Parent Says

No matter what the physical arrangement of an ECE classroom may be, one factor almost always stands out: The children are busy and involved in whatever they are doing.

Parents notice the changes in the classroom atmosphere and the children's attitude.

"This is the best thing that ever happened to my child and to our school. I can really see the difference," claims Louise Epstein, chairman of the ECE parent advisory council at Los Angeles' Warner Avenue School.

"The children are too busy learning to become discipline problems," she says. "No one gets bored because there are so many rewarding things to do."

Parent Participation at Travis

"We're not putting parents on when we tell them it's their school," says Del Sturm, principal of Scandia School at Travis Air Force Base. "Most parents were never involved to this extent in a school before. Here parents are expected to know what their children are learning."

Sturm's campaign to spark the necessary community involvement for Scandia's ECE program included frequent letters to parents with messages such as this:

00012

Older students stimulate the interest of young children in learning.

Do you ever wake up in the morning with the blahs? The cure isn't "As the World Turns" or other TV melodramas. The cure is spending a couple of hours doing some exciting things in your school. Just dial 437-4691 and say, "Del, I would like the exhilarating experience of getting involved with the students today."

Sturm says the response was "fantastic." Scandia now has over 50 parents committed to the school, plus parents who work in homes and those on call, he said. "Some don't even have kids who go here, or kids at all. It's just that kind of community effort."

The Travis community plays a major role in planning Scandia's ECE program. An advisory committee of parents, base residents, teachers, and administrators is responsible for establishing and maintaining the goals and objectives of ECE at Scandia. Members of Scandia's committee include a doctor from the base hospital, the school custodian, and parents of children from Scandia and the other base schools.

"Things have changed at Scandia," the head of the ECE advisory committee says. "Parents are becoming involved; teachers don't look at their work as just a job; the principal sees himself as a teacher rather than an administrator; and the children don't like to go home."

The ECE committee is now working to spread the ECE idea to other schools, starting with nearby Travis Elementary School.

Parent Participation in San Mateo County

Nancy Boyette, ECE coordinator at La Honda School in San Mateo County, told Bill

00013

"Having volunteers means . . . we can have one adult for every seven children . . . ."

Shilstone, a reporter for *The Redwood City Tribune*, that she felt the ECE program worked at her school because parents, teachers, and members of the community were required to work together to assess the needs of their school and to write up the school's program. "Parent involvement in the education of their children seemed to be the deciding factor in helping children feel good about themselves, their community, and their school. The result was a favorable pupil attitude toward learning," she said.

Another school in San Mateo County—Hoover Elementary School in Redwood City—found that volunteer participation was so important that it used locally raised funds to hire a full-time coordinator for the volunteer effort.

"Having volunteers means that with the teacher, an aide, and a volunteer, we can have one adult for every seven children in some classrooms," C. W. Newberry, Hoover principal, told Shilstone. "That makes a big difference because there is no way that students can be taught at the same level in a class where 14 of 22 are primarily Spanish-speaking."

"Most of the parents tell me their children seem to benefit from their presence in the

C0014

classroom," Hoover's volunteer coordinator told the reporter. "One mother, who can't come to school because she works, volunteered to do work at home because her son said, 'Gee, mom, Johnny's mom helps in the classroom, why don't you?'

"Parent volunteers are showing their children they care about school. If their parents don't care, why should the children?" the coordinator asked.

Volunteers sometimes spot problems which teachers might not see and bring them up at advisory board meetings. "The volunteer," Newberry says, "is freer than the teacher and might be able to discover that the quiet student who seems to be doing well is really only vegetating."

Hoover's volunteer coordinator increased the opportunity for parents to help by establishing a day care center for preschoolers, run by volunteers, in an empty classroom.

Parent Participation: Sometimes Difficult

State Department of Education teams charged with monitoring and reviewing every ECE program find that parents become learners themselves and begin exerting leadership in the school/community group as they get involved in their youngsters' learning.

Although parent participation is considered one of ECE's greatest contributions to improved schools, state officials point out that schools sometimes have great difficulty achieving as much participation as they want and need. They cite three causes of difficulties:

- Traditional parent apathy resulting from former school practices that excluded parents from any significant role in the operations of their school
- Large numbers of families in which both parents work at full-time jobs as breadwinners
- Single parents who earn a living for themselves and their children

Education of Parents—A Must

Parent education is another key element in ECE. It is viewed as a continuous process to aid parents in understanding child growth and development and to reinforce the concept of cooperative responsibility on the part of home, school, and community.

Although the parent education and parent involvement phases of ECE are treated as separate components, the two are closely related. Each reinforces and adds depth to the other. Furthermore, parent education activities often serve as the springboard for broader parent participation in the ECE program.

Parent education is provided in a number of ways. It may include seminars, classes at the school site or in mobile classrooms, guided observations of children at work in the classroom, small group meetings, parent-teacher conferences, home visits, informational materials, and school-home communications.

Parents may study a wide variety of subjects, based on their needs and desires. They may wish to study child development or how to help their children at home. Or they may want to learn more about nutrition, foods, or children's health. Any identified need which would enrich and strengthen the family's involvement in education is appropriate for study.

At Fremont School in Santa Ana, an extensive parent education program is in operation. It features classes, home visits, frequent home-school communications, parent-teacher conferences, and meetings.

Many of the Spanish-speaking parents at the school are learning English in a series of day and evening classes. A child care center at the school gives parents a place to leave their

C0015

"Students don kid-sized headsets to practice difficult words."

class or work as a volunteer. The center, operated by a full-time bilingual supervisor, offers the children educational/recreational activities as well as custodial care.

Individualized Instruction—A Must

A hand-lettered sign on the wall at Santa Ana's Fremont School reads: "You children are all different and we will treat you differently."

In a sentence, that is what ECE is all about. It recognizes that each child has unique needs, talents, interests, and abilities which require personalized attention.

There are many ways the ECE approach to education is attempting to serve the individual child. Each facet of the program seems to complement the others. ECE gives staff and parents an opportunity to free themselves of stereotyped thinking about the young. As a result, they are taking a fresh look at how individual children think and feel.

Too often in the past a child was diagnosed for his weaknesses, and these weaknesses became the focus of too much attention. Through ECE, the people who know the children best—the parents, teachers, and principal at the school site—are urged to develop a program and an environment that is alive and vital and which concentrates on the children's strengths.

Instructional efforts focus on giving each child, by the end of the third grade, sufficient command of the basic skills in reading, language, and mathematics so he or she can succeed in future schooling.

Major emphasis is given to individualizing instruction by:

- Lowering the adult/pupil ratio to approximately 1-to-10
- Developing and following a diagnostic/prescriptive approach for learning
- Enriching and changing the learning environment

Lowering the Adult/Pupil Ratio

The adult/pupil ratio is reduced by using aides, volunteers, and parents as classroom assistants under the direction of the teacher. This allows each child to receive more attention and help at the time he needs it.

The lower adult/pupil ratio in ECE contrasts sharply with the traditional primary classroom where there may be 32 youngsters with a single adult—hardly a situation that allows for personalized instruction.

In many cases, older students work with youngsters in the ECE program on a one-to-one basis. This type of relationship—called cross-age tutoring—often benefits the tutor as much as the child he is helping.

Using the Diagnostic/Prescriptive Approach

By using a diagnostic/prescriptive approach to learning, each child is able to move through the instructional program at a rate that matches his ability. Learning materials and experiences are designed to be challenging, yet not so difficult that they lead to frustra-

Here's How One Child Responded

One parent, who looks on ECE as a "minor miracle," tells how her child responded to the individualized approach:

"An individualized program was worked out for Jane, who usually studied at a table with six to eight other boys and girls assisted by a teacher, an aide, or one of the volunteers.

"In the beginning, the children were on the same materials, but as time passed some zipped ahead while others went more slowly. Once, when I asked Jane what page the class was on in math, she said, 'I don't know. It doesn't matter, Mom. We go at our own speed.' "

00016

00017

Each child's behavior, attitudes, and schoolwork are observed regularly.

tion and failure. By giving each child a feeling of success, ECE seeks to motivate the child to learn.

Another important plus for ECE's diagnostic/prescriptive approach is that it is a developmental one. Learning is based primarily on a planned sequence of events, and a new skill in a particular area is not tackled until the preceding skill is mastered.

The Assessment Process

In ECE, diagnosis is but the initial step in a comprehensive assessment process. This process involves continuous appraisal and reappraisal and the measuring or testing of desired skills. The process looks at the total child, directing attention to the following areas of development:

- Cognitive—reading, math, and language development
- Affective—interests, attitudes, and self-confidence
- Psychomotor—physical coordination for both large and small muscles
- Social—responsibility, self-control, cooperation
- Health—nutrition, vision, hearing; dental, physical, and mental health

Each child's behavior, attitudes, and schoolwork are observed regularly, and the initial prescription is modified as changes occur in the child. Records are kept of each child's progress so the teacher and the parent both know the child's learning pattern at all times.

A Learning Environment for Individualization

Another way instruction is being individualized is by ECE's insistence on broad changes in the learning environment.

For example, instructional methods like team teaching are being tried in many places, and children are no longer necessarily grouped according to grade level or age.

In a single classroom, children may be working entirely alone, in a small cluster with other youngsters, or in a large group. While some work on their own or with fellow pupils, the teachers, aides, and volunteers work with other youngsters—individually, in clusters, or in larger groups.

At Santa Ana's Fremont School, a brand new facility, there are no walls separating classrooms or artificial barriers separating age groups.

The Fremont staff is divided into eight-member teams. Each team has four teachers, three instructional aides, and one intern—a fifth-year college student working toward a teaching credential. The teams are supplemented by parent volunteers.

Since Fremont serves a large Spanish-speaking population, every teaching team has bilingual members.

A team works with approximately 120 youngsters, cutting across two or three age levels. Students work at learning centers or in small groups. There are no fixed desks with chairs in Fremont's brightly colored classrooms. Every student has his own portable desk that he can carry from one learning activity to another.

At 107th Street School, an older school in the Watts area of Los Angeles, walls divide classrooms, but two rooms sometimes are combined into one by sliding partitions.

Each room has been arranged differently and attractively. In one multiage classroom, a group of three children may be reading with an aide; the teacher may be working with a group of five youngsters in a semicircle around the chalkboard; other youngsters may be working at tables or on the floor, in clusters, or individually.

In another 107th Street School classroom, students select their learning activities for the morning from a large chart with pockets and gaily colored paper strips for each area of

00018

00019

"Programs offered . . . in traditional classrooms meet the needs of . . . 50% of the students."

choice: math, phonics, reading, social science, art, story writing, spelling, language, music.

Individualization at Travis

A wide choice of subjects and environment is provided at the Scandia Elementary School, Travis Air Force Base. Quiet corners are available for individual study, bustling central areas for class projects, and protected nooks for small group work.

When the ECE program for Scandia was being planned, two teachers, Kay Ames and Judy Janssen, found they shared a mutual interest in language arts. Working together, they transformed half the second grade area of the school into an elaborate language arts center. Nine separate skill stations, each providing students with an exciting climate of fast learning and academic challenge, were established.

A sandy-haired eight-year-old scrawls out a story under a large "Be an Author" sign at the creative writing station. "It's gonna be about how my dad is a tech sergeant on the flight line," he beams.

Here's how Carol Ostrinsky, writing in *Airman*, the U.S. Air Force magazine, describes the Scandia program in action:

"The skills station houses a prefab filmstrip theater. Three students cluster with a parent aide under the cardboard roof and review language skills films. Earphones line the walls at the media stations where students don kid-sized headsets to practice difficult words. A serious second grader with a cap of dark curls records her voice at the automatic language master. 'House,' she pipes. 'House,' the deep-voiced recording replies.

" 'The kids were tired of the traditional readers and so were we,' explained Mrs. Ames. 'Designing and constructing these stations were exciting and fun for us, and the kids love it.'

"The most detailed effort of the teacher team was the creation of brightly decorated learning activity boxes for the central station in the large room. A student entering the station selects a box specially assigned for his or her special needs. Each box contains easy-to-follow directions along with a task to do or a game to play.

"Some boxes contain spelling or word games where the child follows a rainbow trail of consonant-blended words or double-letter words. Other boxes have tiny gadgets and toys to pick out certain letters from a well of alphabet pieces. Stacking spice boxes in alphabetical order or running through a maze of rhyming words makes language a game.

"A teacher aide will check the answers. If a student successfully completes one box, he or she may advance to a more difficult box. If there are errors, the teacher may assign some work to help the student improve.

"ECE meant a complete change in teaching techniques for a 10-year veteran of traditional classrooms. 'I was a very standard teacher,' the teacher explains. 'The whole class did the same lesson in the same book. There were times when I'd sluff off while the class did busy work. It's all different now. Every minute there's something to do.'

"The teacher's special subject is discovery math. Like the language arts center at Scandia, the math room has several stations geared to students with different ability levels. 'Ears open,' she tells eager students as she points out individual assignments on a large chart.

"While the rest of the class settles down to work, a tiny foot in a scuffed blue tennis shoe gently nudges her leg. 'Teet-cha, show me?' shyly asks a wispy dark-haired girl in a long checkered dress.

" 'Sompie just came here from Thailand,' she explains. 'This program lets me give her some individual attention while the other children work. I can also check each assignment as soon as it is done to give the students immediate reinforcement.' "

Individualization at Manteca

When John Lovell, a *Manteca Bulletin* reporter, asked Bob Parker, principal of the

00020

ECE children work in small groups.

Lincoln School in Manteca, what ECE was all about, Parker reached for a visual aid to illustrate his answer.

The principal displayed a graph, based on achievement test scores and other factors designed to show how ineffective conventional teaching methods are in dealing with the various learning capacities of pupils.

"The graph," Parker said, "indicates that the programs offered by orthodox teachers in traditional classrooms meet the needs of something like 50 percent of the students, and that they come close to fulfilling those of another 20 percent—but miss nearly one-third of them by a mile. The lower 15 percent, identified as slow learners by tests as well as by classroom performance, and the top 15 percent, including the mentally gifted, are almost left out in a system designed to move youngsters through one-teacher classrooms in groups of about 30."

Lovell's feature article on ECE offered a detailed description of how the program works in Manteca:

"Under the ECE program, with the children separated into small groups and many of them following lesson procedures on their own, the teachers theoretically will, at long last, be able to give Johnny (the student who can't read) the one-to-one tutoring it will take to help him along.

"With extra funds provided under ECE," Lovell wrote, "the teacher will be able to give

C0021

"A first visit . . . can be staggering."

more help to the youngsters who need special assistance. If she is teaching in kindergarten or one of the first three grades this year at Lincoln School, for example, she will have such experts as counselor Ethel Parham and reading specialist Sandra Breitenbucher moving in and out of her classroom on a regular basis.

"Also available are adult teaching aides, paid for by ECE, and parents who come in on a voluntary basis.

"There are also seventh and eighth grade boys and girls who assist in the kindergarten through third grade classrooms during their own free periods. These youngsters are providing a double benefit . . . .

"First of all—in what to a layman may seem like one of the hidden mysteries of education—a seventh grader can sit down with a second grader and break through a communications barrier that the younger child's parents and teacher may have been trying to unlock for a long time. People who have been present when this alchemy takes place can become emotional when they describe it.

"The other side of the coin is another wonder to behold: the seventh or eighth grader who succeeds in showing a primary grader the way around a stumbling block takes a big step forward toward eliminating one of his own.

"A first visit to either of the Manteca area's two ECE schools—Lincoln and French Camp—can be 'staggering,' " Lovell said. Then he explained:

"The physical setting seems unreal. There may be a patch of thick carpeting, with or without cushions, where a small group may gather for reading. There is an art table, a table with math games, an assortment of audiovisual devices.

"The whole scene seems chaotic—especially if the visitor hurries away. A second glance, though, begins to reveal a pattern.

"One of the things which can be observed is an almost complete lack of wandering attention that one expects to see among the occupants of a classroom—the low 15 percent and the high 15 percent.

"Personalized teaching under ECE, the principal says, puts each youngster in a program designed to give him material tough enough to challenge him—while containing enough material in which he can succeed so that the result is a balance which will develop his self-esteem.

" 'These pupils,' the principal adds, indicating some first graders, 'will come in on a Monday morning to a pigeon hole with their name on it and pick up an assignment sheet which starts them on the week's work. From time to time, they will find that their assignments involve a game or the solving of a puzzle, and much of the time they will tell you they are having fun.

" 'But to continue to make it all work,' Principal Parker says, 'we must get more parent involvement.' "

A New Role for Staff—A Must

The Teacher's Role

"I've never known teachers to work harder," claims Ferne Young, ECE coordinator for the office of the Orange County Superintendent of Schools.

Her feelings are echoed by many others who recognize the pivotal role teachers play in the ECE concept. One who agrees wholeheartedly with Mrs. Young is Margaret Kennedy, ECE consultant for Los Angeles County, who notes:

"In spite of the extra effort required, many teachers are saying, 'I've never worked so hard, but this is the most rewarding thing I have done in education. The children are interested in learning and the classrooms are much more pleasant.' "

ECE demands that a new look be taken at teaching and the role of the teacher, because under ECE, the teacher no longer is simply a conveyor of information, but a planner and

00022

In an ECE school the principal is the chief teacher.

manager of all resources and activities within the learning environment.

"Staffs are beginning to understand what it means to pay more attention to what is learned than to what is taught," explains Karen Olsen, a member of the state's ECE monitoring and review team.

Ms. Olsen, a former teacher, believes the greatest impact of ECE has been a change in the traditional roles of staff.

"Everyone's role has changed," she says. "Classroom teachers have become master teachers, teachers of parents and of individual children. In changing their role, teachers have done more thinking about their professional selves."

Since much of ECE's effectiveness rests on the dedication, innovativeness, and enthusiasm of the staff, teachers are given the opportunity to choose whether or not they wish to participate in the program.

Some staff resistance has been reported because ECE calls for such sweeping changes. Teachers have complained that they are overworked with extra meetings, paper work, and the longer day required to prepare individual lessons for each pupil. Observers feel, however, that many difficulties have been overcome, largely through discussion, training, and the successes that are being achieved in ECE classrooms.

Other difficulties:

- Some teachers and administrators have interpreted ECE to be a math and reading program. In spite of the ECE policy statement calling for "balanced curriculum," observers have noted that math and reading have dominated some

00023

"In some ECE schools the principal even makes house calls."

school programs so completely that art, music, science, and social studies are taught the last thing in the afternoon—if there is time.

- Some teachers and administrators focus on the form of the program and disregard the intent. Those who fall into this trap must learn how to see children and their parents as people rather than as racial, ethnic, or social stereotypes. Examples to avoid: The ECE director who excuses lack of parent involvement in the development of the school budget by stating, "Well, these are welfare parents and they can't understand budgets"; or the ECE teacher who explains that the class tomato plant is her "career education project" for a class of Mexican-American kindergartners.

Overall, however, teachers are performing well and most are supportive of the program. They are encouraged by the fact that they are able to extend their full talent to teaching because they no longer are expected to do everything in the classroom.

The role of the teacher is truly different from the experience of most teachers in the typical school of the past. In an ECE program, the teacher is the leader of a team effort—a mixture of teacher aides, parent volunteers, grandparents, older students, auxiliary personnel, and teachers with various kinds of expertise. No longer can the teacher shut the door and exclude the outside world from what goes on in the classroom.

The Principal's Role

As the educational leader of a school, the principal plays a particularly critical role in bringing together diverse elements within the school-community and welding them into a unified force working toward common goals.

"A good principal knows how to use community input and participation to the best advantage and still keep his teachers from feeling threatened by community involvement," maintains Carolyn Stone, ECE coordinator at Warner Avenue School in Los Angeles.

Louise Epstein, chairman of the parent advisory committee at the school, believes Warner's teachers committed themselves fully to ECE because they were confident their principal would help resolve conflicts or problems.

Across town from Warner Avenue, at 111th Street School in Watts, the ECE coordinator credits her principal, Lovelia Flournoy, with "turning our school around."

"Our principal," she says, "is deeply involved in every phase of ECE. She meets continually with staff and parents and has developed good communications in the school and in the community. We need someone like that, a person who can bring in innovative ideas and provide strong leadership."

Besides giving leadership to the ECE program, principals often assist their staffs with recordkeeping. This is a massive task in ECE since the needs and progress of individual students, as well as the objectives and progress of the program itself, must be continually assessed and recorded.

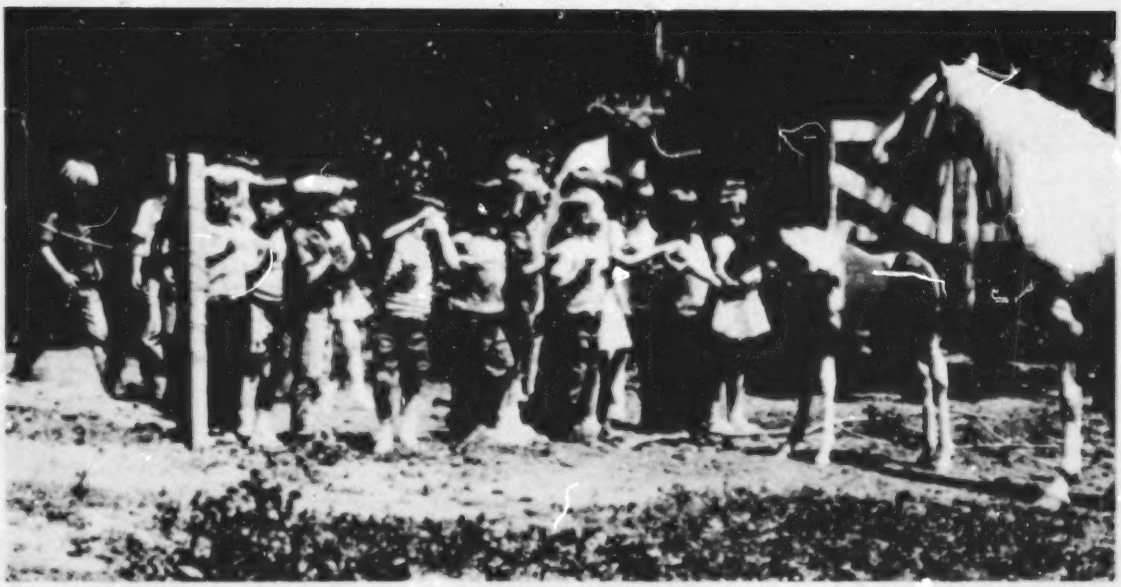
In some ECE schools the principals even make house calls if parents can't get to the school.

Thus, the principal's role under ECE is far more than that of an administrator at a desk. In an ECE school he is the chief teacher as well as the person who leads in the development of parent, teacher, and community involvement in creating the school program and making it work.

The added burdens ECE places on principals have created problems. Some principals complain that they are overworked with extra meetings and paper work. The job of coordinating the work of community volunteers, many of whom must work on odd schedules, is also disturbing to some principals.

In some cases, principals have been criticized for playing a key role in decisions to adopt new, unproved systems of programmed learning materials to achieve ECE goals. In

00024



ECE meant a complete change in teaching techniques.

other cases, principals have been responsible for the misuse of excellent programs that have been adopted as panaceas for all problems.

Auxiliary Personnel and Staff Development

Staffing under ECE is improved by the wide use of such auxiliary personnel as a psychologist, a nurse, counselors, and community workers, in addition to teachers and aides.

Because the staff carries such a heavy responsibility in ECE, staff development activities are under way at most participating schools to train or retrain personnel.

Staff development plans at each school usually reflect an awareness of the need to understand and meet the learning requirements of all children adequately, particularly in schools where the younsters' racial or ethnic background is different from that of the staff.

Inservice training is offered to credentialed and noncredentialed personnel, parents, and other volunteers.

In Sacramento, for example, the school district's Staff Training Department conducts inservice training programs and seminars and other activities to help teachers, aides, and parents learn to use time, space, materials, and human resources in new and productive ways.

At Sacramento's O. W. Erlewine School, half of the ECE staff is taking part this year in an inservice program stressing diagnosis and individualized instruction. Ongoing inservice classes at the school provide training for the full ECE staff in diagnosis and prescription, individualization, development and use of learning centers, and the effective use of aides. The inservice effort is supplemented by weekly staff meetings that often include members of the ECE advisory committee as well as other parents.

Concise Planning—A Must

Planning for an ECE program captures the energy of the school community. The school staff, parents, and others from the community enter into a process of assessing school

00025

"Planning for an ECE program captures the energy of the school community."

needs and setting goals and objectives related to those needs.

"Because this process forces people to think and come to an agreement, it is vital to the success of an ECE program," says H. Glenn Davis, ECE program manager and associate superintendent for elementary education at the State Department of Education.

"Before making any decisions about what their ECE program should be, parents and staff must understand what is actually going on in the school, what the deficiencies are, and what changes might be made," Davis adds.

Making an Assessment of Needs

In conducting its needs assessment, the school/community group uses a variety of techniques. Often included are surveys of the school's population, programs, staffing patterns, and training programs for staff. Also frequently included are analyses of available resources, telephone or personal interviews, and written questionnaires seeking the view of parents and staff about current conditions and desired changes in the school program.

Establishing Objectives

Once a school/community group has established a clear record of existing conditions, it develops a precise statement of desired conditions. Overcoming the differences between what *is* and what *is desired* becomes the goal of the local ECE program.

As school/community groups assess their educational needs and desires, many of the people involved change their views on what they think they want their school to be doing. "Usually, these changes help establish a good common ground between the different elements and points of view, laying a solid foundation for other aspects of the ECE program," explains Ferne L. Young, ECE coordinator for the office of the Orange County Superintendent of Schools.

Developing a Plan of Action

Another important element in program planning is the development of steps to be followed in the operating phase, including a schedule of activities to carry out the plan.

Schools develop a management design that details fiscal administration and procedures for gathering, processing, and reporting information.

Evaluating Program Implementation

An evaluation design containing procedures for assessing all phases of the program, including pupil progress, is developed and it becomes an integral part of the school's comprehensive plan.

Local plans are reviewed and modified annually by the school/community group as objectives are met or not met and priorities are rearranged. Objectives are usually expressed in measurable terms. Activities are proposed to meet each objective. For example, in the instructional area of reading, Rio Vista Elementary School in Placentia identified the following as one of its goals:

To implement an individualized reading program which will emphasize learning options for children and which will enrich every child according to his or her need and interest.

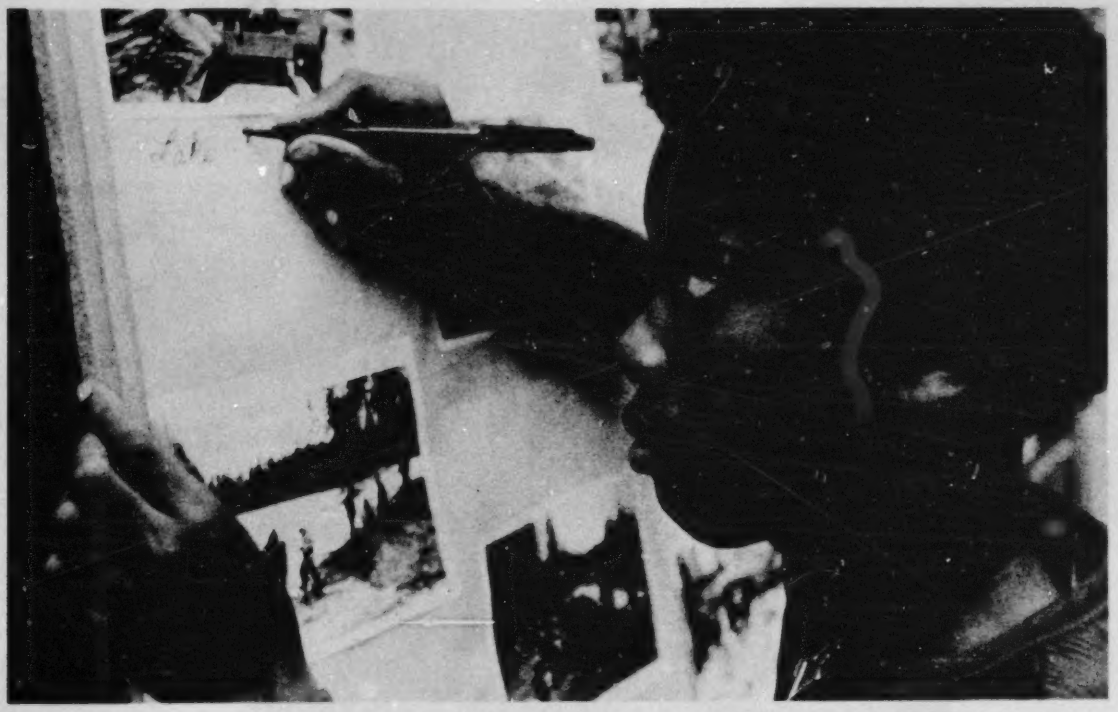
An objective related to that goal was stated as follows:

"Given one year of instruction in reading, children will demonstrate a mean gain of 1.2 months growth per 1.0 months of instruction as measured by *Wide Range Achievement Test* (Reading)."

The major approaches for meeting that objective were listed as:

- Use a wide variety of materials appropriate to varied learning styles and backgrounds.
- Utilize teacher-developed learning centers to provide children with many reading experiences.

00026



"The students progressed a year and one-half . . . in their year in ECE."

- Utilize prescriptive tasks and appropriate methods for all children.
- Provide optimum staffing ratios by using specialists, teachers, aides, college tutors, parent volunteers, and community resource persons.

For each objective, the planners determined when the activities would be performed, who would conduct them (teachers and parents), who would evaluate their effectiveness (principal, teachers, and parents), and where the evaluation results would be recorded and kept (in the classroom).

What happened at Rio Vista? The year-end tests of 125 first graders and 106 second graders showed that both groups made an average of 1.5 months gain for each month of instruction. To put it another way, the students progressed a year and one-half in reading during their year in ECE. In fact, the second graders, who started the year reading at the level of 2.3 (second grade, third month) ended the year at 3.8—a full year ahead.

A detailed plan of action like the one used in Placentia appears to be a major strength of ECE. In fact, the first-year ECE evaluation report concluded that the more clearly stated the objectives of a program, the greater its success in attaining those objectives.

Accountability--A Must

Since accountability at all levels is an integral part of ECE, monitoring and evaluation are a continual process.

Before being recommended to the State Board of Education for approval, ECE school district plans are rated by State Department of Education consultants. Subsequently, one or more members of a monitoring team makes periodic on-site visits to the school to observe

00027

ECE funds are awarded on a competitive basis.

the program in action and to obtain direct impressions of its effectiveness from teachers, parents, and administrators.

A three-part evaluation system has been developed for all ECE programs, with each of the parts being given a different emphasis or weight. The three parts are:

- Process—which includes the writing of the plan, implementation of a time management system, and the on-site visit
- Product—the end-of-the year attainment of specified objectives, including pupil progress
- Fiscal management

The State Department of Education furnishes standard forms so school districts can submit regular reports to document expenditure of funds, assess the degree and success of program implementation, and evaluate pupil progress in quantitative terms.

In addition to accomplishing program audit tasks, the regular on-site visits by members of the Sacramento-based monitor and review team lend moral support and encouragement to local programs.

"This is one of the few times people from the state have actually come into our schools, observed pupils and teachers at work, talked and spent time with persons in the school-community," notes one ECE coordinator.

"The visit of the state team is helpful experience," adds another coordinator. "There is discussion and feedback from the outside, and we get encouragement as well as constructive criticism."

Another reason ECE is having such an impact on public education is that it rewards success by awarding larger portions of expansion funds to districts receiving high ratings. Funds are awarded on a competitive basis, giving local schools further motivation for success.

00028

First Year Results

ECE Is Working

First-Year data indicate that ECE is working—and it is working well.

The ECE legislation weighted assessment of program implementation as 70 percent of the first year's evaluation. Data collected in 1973-74 from on-site reviews at each ECE school by the State Department of Education's monitor and review teams indicate that these schools have been overwhelmingly successful in implementing the ECE concept. These data reveal that nearly 90 percent of ECE schools have:

- Introduced and operated an individualized program of instruction that continually appraises the needs and provides appropriate learning opportunities for each child in the primary grades.
- Involved parents as an instrumental part of the ECE reform effort through their active participation in the planning, implementation and evaluation of comprehensive school programs.
- Introduced staff development activities that are enabling teachers, aides, and parents and other volunteers to work together effectively in the individualized ECE school programs.
- Established an ongoing process of parent education to aid parents in understanding child development and growth and to reinforce the concept of cooperative responsibilities on the part of home, school, and community.
- Engaged principals, teachers, and parents in an unprecedented process of comprehensive program design tailored to the pupil populations of each ECE school, with the result that program plans, implementation and evaluation have been thorough and consistent.

As should be expected for such a large program, not all ECE schools were able to implement their effort effectively. As a result, 13 percent of the 800 school districts participating in the 1973-74 school year were not permitted to expand their ECE program in 1974-75.

Assessment of pupil achievement was weighted at 10 percent of ECE's first year evaluation. Studies prepared by the State Department of Education on the operation of ECE during the 1973-74 school year revealed that students in ECE programs demonstrated substantial pupil achievement gains in many

00029

Academic gains exceeded normally anticipated performance.

schools, gains that Superintendent of Public Instruction Wilson Riles said were beyond his expectations. "They were particularly impressive," he said, "for a program of such magnitude and for a program with more than 50 percent of the participating schools serving economically disadvantaged children."

Riles pointed out, however, that while there is no doubt about the accuracy of ECE gain scores, "The first year of any major reform effort must focus on building a foundation for change and an assessment system to measure that change. Our first year results indicated that change is taking place faster and more effectively that we'd dreamed it would. And as we refine our assessment techniques, we'll have better ways to measure that change in the years ahead."

Overall, however, test scores (75 percent of ECE children were given pre- and post-tests) showed that pupil academic gains exceeded normally anticipated performance levels.

In the first grade, 47 percent of the pupils in ECE programs started the year in the lowest quartile of achievement. At the end of the year, only 26 percent were scoring in the lowest quarter of achievement.

Specific results in mathematics and reading at the end of the first year were as follows:

Mathematics Results

Substantial gains were reported in mathematics. Pupils in the first, second, and third grades in ECE programs progressed at the rate of 12 months gain for 10 months of schooling.

The typical gain in mathematics for the average child is 10 months of progress for 10 months of schooling. For economically disadvantaged children not enrolled in special programs, the typical gain is 7 months for 10 months of schooling.

Reading Results

In reading/language development, pupils at all four grade levels in ECE programs achieved an average of 11 months of educational gain for each 10 months of instruction.

Reading gains were even greater for ECE children when the basic ECE allocation of $130 per child per year was used in combination with funds from categorical aid programs.

For example, when compensatory education programs, operating under the federally supported Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act are coordinated with ECE, the typical gain in reading is 13 months of progress for 10 months of instruction. Typical reading progress in a successful Title I program that does not include additional help from other special programs is 10 months gain for 10 months of instruction.

The typical learning rate in reading for economically disadvantaged children who do not have the benefit of specially funded programs is only 7 months gain for 10 months of schooling.

The typical learning rate in reading for the average child is 10 months growth for 10 months of instruction.

00030

The Road Ahead

As with any major new undertaking, administrative refinements and program improvements can be made to keep ECE moving forward successfully.

Strengthening the Program

The 1973-74 evaluation report identified areas that should be strengthened to increase ECE's overall effectiveness. It included these recommendations:

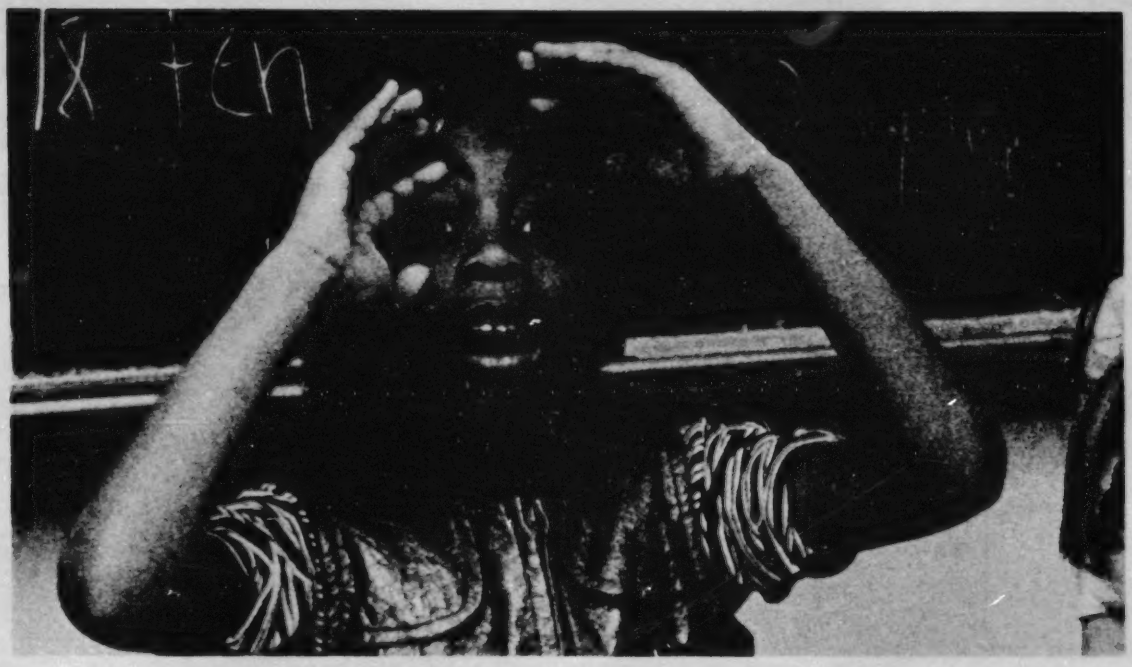
- Districts need guidance on the distinction between parent involvement and parent education.
- Districts should be encouraged to expand health and auxiliary services through use of community resources.
- Standardized testing for all ECE participants is needed.
- School districts need to budget for evaluation at the district level, and schools need to budget for evaluation at school levels.

The State Department of Education is now responding to these recommendations and is making the suggested improvements.

The 1973-74 evaluation study also analyzed self-assessment reports from participating ECE schools. Each school identified areas within its own program that should be strengthened. According to the state evaluation, the recommendations made most frequently by local schools included:

- Health/auxiliary services: Continue the present program, improve communications, provide additional services, increase parent involvement, improve program objectives, provide inservice workshops.
- Parent education: Make home-school communication more effective and expand the scope of parent education programs.
- Parent involvement: Improve the recruitment and training of parent volunteers, increase the number and variety of involvement activities, strengthen home-school communications.

C 00031



ECE has generated things like excitement, enthusiasm.

- Staff development: Improve the organization of inservice training, increase visitations to other schools and programs, improve workshops, offer more training in teaching techniques and methods.

Continuing and Expanding ECE

The ECE program was expanded in the 1974-75 school year to include 22 percent of the children in the four grade levels covered by ECE. The 1974-75 appropriation of $41 million is enabling ECE to serve approximately 280,000 children at more than 1,300 schools in 829 school districts.

The goal for 1975-76 is to have 50 percent of the state's children in kindergarten through the third grade in ECE schools. The cost has been estimated at about $107 million, or $67 million more than the current cost of the program.

Although ECE was designed to include all of the state's 1.28 million youngsters in kindergarten through the third grade by 1976-77, more funds must be appropriated by the State Legislature and approved by the Governor if ECE is to be continued and expanded to the extent envisioned.

While future funding has not yet been assured, one thing is certain: ECE has made a profound mark on the educational landscape. In less than two years, it has generated tremendous momentum for change. Many of its concepts are being adapted for use in the upper elementary grades and in nonparticipating schools. The impact of this sweeping attempt to revitalize public education in California is being watched across the nation.

As the program continues to yield positive results and as public support and enthusiasm grow, the promise of ECE in California may well be fulfilled—an achievement of major significance for children everywhere.

00032

Appendix

Additional information about California's Early Childhood Education program may be obtained from the following publications of the State Department of Education, P.O. Box 271, Sacramento, CA 95802:

- *Early Childhood Education: Report of the Task Force*, 1972. 63 pp. $1.01 including tax.
- *Early Childhood Education: Recommendations for Program Implementation*, 1974. 33 pp. $.90 including tax.
- *Early Childhood Education: First Annual Evaluation Report, 1973-74*, 1975. 46 pp. $1.43 including tax.

The following publications are available from the Early Childhood Education Management Team, California State Department of Education, 721 Capitol Mall, Sacramento, CA 95814, at no charge:

- *The Early Childhood Education Proposal (A Master Plan to Redesign Primary Education in California)*, 1972. 15 pp.
- *Policies for Early Childhood Education*, 1973. 11 pp.

For information concerning local programs, contact your school district administrative office or the office of your county superintendent of schools.

For assistance concerning the inauguration and operation of ECE programs, call the ECE Management Team office in Sacramento—916-322-4330.

74-102 03-0722 4-75 7M

00933